



Arkansas Department of Health

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Governor Asa Hutchinson
José R. Romero, MD, Secretary of Health

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Amended July 23, 2020
Amended August 10, 2020
Amended August 21, 2020
Amended February 15, 2021
Changed February 26, 2021 from Directive to Guidance

Guidance for Community and School Sponsored Team Sports

The Secretary of Health, in consultation with the Governor, has sole authority over all instances of quarantine, isolation, and restrictions on commerce and travel throughout Arkansas, as necessary and appropriate to control disease in the state of Arkansas as authorized by Ark. Code Ann. §20-7-109--110. Based on available scientific evidence, it is necessary and appropriate to take further action to ensure that COVID-19 remains controlled and that residents and visitors in Arkansas remain safe.

On March 26, 2020, the Secretary of Health in consultation with the Governor placed limitations on public gatherings. This directive provided requirements for lifting limitations to community-based and school-sponsored team sports through a phased approach for both adult and youth athletes. Each phase has a set of General Requirements that apply across all team sports with specific requirements applied based on the nature of the contact required by the rules or conditions of the sport. As of February 26, 2020, this document was changed from being a directive to guidance.

This guidance does not include intercollegiate athletic team sports nor apply to bands, orchestras, or choirs. Please see the Guidance for Community and School Sponsored Music and Theater.

General Requirements

- Maintain minimum physical distancing of six (6) feet between participants at all times, except when actively participating in the sports activity.
- Athletes, coaches, officials, and all staff should be screened prior to any activity by asking the following questions and excluded if the response is affirmative.
 - Have had a fever of 100.4°F or greater in the last 2 days?
 - Have a cough, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle aches (myalgias), sore throat, headache, recent loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea?
 - Had contact with a person known to be infected with COVID-19 within the previous 14

days?

- o Had a positive COVID-19 test in last 10 days?
 - o Waiting on the results of a test for COVID-19?
- Coaches, officials, and all staff (includes all workers in any capacity) should, in addition to the above screening process, have temperature checked by digital thermometer prior to entry, and those whose temperature is 100.4°F or greater should be excluded. It is recommended those with temperature of 100.4°F or greater seek evaluation by a medical professional to be tested for SARS CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.
- The wearing of face coverings must comply with the Governor's Executive Order(s) and the [Face Coverings Directive](#). This directive requires face coverings at all times, except for persons actively participating in athletic activities when a six (6) feet distance is not achievable and when a face covering is inhibitory to the activity or active exercise. Face coverings that completely cover the nose and mouth are required for everyone 10 years of age or older for indoor and outdoor sports while not actively participating. Children between ages of 2 years and 9 years are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering.
 - o Athletes
 - For outdoor sports, face coverings should be worn when not actively participating in an outdoor sports activity and there is not ample space to maintain physical distancing of six (6) feet between persons. Face coverings should be worn while actively participating, if the face covering is not inhibitory to the activity
 - For indoor sports, face coverings should be worn at all times, except when a face covering is inhibitory while actively participating.
 - o Coaches and Staff
 - Face coverings should be worn at all times for indoor and outdoor sports, except for a brief time when coach or staff member has physically distanced at least 12 feet from athletes and other staff.
- Physical distancing of six (6) feet should be maintained in the locker room. Face coverings should be used in locker rooms; it is acceptable to remove face coverings temporarily for washing or bathing.
- Participation is allowed for participants of any age. However, we recommend that participants should refrain if:
 - o They are 65 years of age or older.
 - o They have underlying health conditions including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, severe obesity, asthma or weakened immunity.
- An alcohol-based hand sanitizer or adequate handwashing facilities should be provided for use by all attendees.
- Sports equipment, restrooms, lockers, water fountains and other high touch surfaces should be sanitized frequently during each event.
- Avoid non-sport-related personal contact at all times. This includes, but is not limited to, huddles, high-fives, hand shaking, fist bumping, and chest bumping.

- For games, competitions, tournaments, meets, and other athletic events held in a facility, the facility hosting the event should follow the current [Guidance for Large Indoor or Large Outdoor Venues](#). Spectators are covered under these guidances.
- For training and conditioning held in an athletic facility, the facility should follow the current [Directive for Gym, Fitness Center, Athletic Club and Weight Rooms](#).
- Concession Stands may operate but should follow all applicable sections of the guidance for [Resuming Restaurant Dine-In Operations](#).
- Admission and gate ticket sales should be taken online, when possible.

Close-Contact Team Sports

Examples: Basketball, Wrestling, Football, Flag Football, Cheerleading, Dance, Volleyball, Soccer, Martial Arts

- Team practice is now permitted. This includes intra-squad scrimmages (within the same team), simulated competition, and drills that require physical or close contact between team members. Inter-squad competition between two (2) different teams is allowed.
 - Competitions involving more than two teams (such as jamborees, tournaments, etc.) for close-contact sports are allowed. A plan may be submitted to be reviewed by the Secretary of Health, or his designee, to adh.ehs@arkansas.gov
 - Please submit the plan as far in advance of the event as possible for timely review.
 - The host venue is responsible for compliance with the plan and will be held accountable.
- Other practice, conditioning, and training requirements to follow, in addition to the General Requirements:
 - Group size should be sufficiently limited to maintain six (6) feet between each person while not actively participating in activity, including staff, whenever in an indoor or outdoor enclosed space. Even when not in an enclosed area, those not actively participating should maintain six (6) feet distance between each person.
 - When using weight rooms, practicing calisthenics, running, or other training where vigorous exercise occurs and close contact is not necessary, participants should maintain proper spacing from others by working out with 12 feet between each person. This may require closing or moving some equipment.
 - Spotters are allowed on the outside of weight bars on each side for safety reasons. Physical distancing should be maintained when not actively performing spotting duties.
 - When appropriate, participants should provide their own equipment. If shared equipment is used, disinfection is required frequently during each event or between each use when possible. This would not preclude activities such as playing catch where a ball is tossed back and forth between players.

Limited-Contact Team Sports

Examples: Baseball, Softball, Golf, Track and Field, Cross Country, Bowling, Tennis, Gymnastics, Shooting Sports, Swimming, Individual Dance Competitions

- Practice for all ages may be permitted if the following conditions are implemented:
 - Player group size should be sufficiently limited to maintain 6 feet between each person, including staff, whenever possible.
 - When using weight rooms, calisthenics, or other conditioning training should maintain proper spacing from others by working out with 12 feet between each person. (This may require closing or moving some equipment).
 - Spotters are allowed in weight rooms on the outside of weight bars on each side, for safety reasons. Spotters are also allowed for gymnastics and cheerleading for safety reasons. Physical distancing should be maintained when not actively performing spotting duties.
- When appropriate, participants should provide their own equipment. If shared equipment is used, disinfection should be done frequently during each event or between each use.
- Running events (marathons, 5 or 10Ks, and endurance races) are permitted. However, event starts should be staggered and starting places marked to maintain a physical distance of six (6) feet between participants at the start of the event.
- Competition is allowed for limited-contact sports, including multi-team meets or competitions, but strict adherence to the above guidelines regarding physical distancing, face coverings, and other safety measures should be observed.

ADH will continue to closely monitor the evolving novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Resources

- Additional COVID-19 Information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
- EPA-Approved COVID sanitizers: <https://cfpub.epa.gov/giwiz/disinfectants/index.cfm>
- All ADH COVID-19 Directives and Guidance: <https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/covid-19-health-guidances>